



The Goldsmiths' Library.

THE CHURCH HER OWN ENEMY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE INTELLIGENCER.

Byerley Parsonage, June 24, 1834.

DEAR SIR,

The requisition to which you have lately alluded, for a public meeting of the Clergy of this Archdeaconry, was presented to the Venerable Robert Markham, the Archdeacon, at Doncaster, on Monday, the 16th instant, by the Vicar of Sheffield. It contained upwards of one hundred and ten names from the principal towns in the Riding and from York. These had been obtained in a very short time, and most of the Clergy signed it eagerly. It had seventeen signatures from the parish of Leeds. A copy of it was sent to the Archdeacon, on the second day of its existence, that he might know what was in contemplation.

But at Doncaster an Address to the King, thanking his Majesty for his late declarations of attachment to the Church, was produced, and presented to the Clergy for signature, *as being preferable to holding an Archidiaconal meeting*. This Address was also presented for signature at the visitations at Wakefield, Leeds, and Halifax, and many of the original requisitionists were thus **CONVERTED**! The result is thus stated by the Venerable Archdeacon in a circular letter which the presiding Clergymen of the chief parishes have received. As the originator of the requisition, I have also been honoured by the receipt of a copy:—

“REV. SIR,

“I have to request that you will respectfully inform those
“who have signed a requisition to me, to call an early meeting
“of the Clergy of my Archdeaconry, that in my progress through
“the West Riding, I find it to be the almost general feeling of
“the Clergy, assembled at the visitations, that *‘it is not advisable to call a meeting of the Clergy at present.’* I have also
“had letters to the same effect from several of the Clergy whom
“I did not see. Under these circumstances I beg you will say
“that I think it my duty to be guided by the wishes of the majority on this occasion.

“Believe me to be, &c. &c.

“ROBERT MARKHAM.

“To the Rev. G. S. Bull.”

I felt it my duty publicly to state the result of this application, and now beg your indulgence for a few remarks upon it, and upon some objections which I have heard to the public meeting.

I regret that so many of my brethren have been induced virtually to recall their expressed wish for a primitive and constitutional meeting of the clergy at this crisis. I think it would have done much good, and prevented some evil. The plea, that the session of Parliament is nearly closed is not a good one. There was time enough for our petitions to have been presented. Another plea, that the Irish Church Commission should first give its report, is, in my view, weak; for the Whigs constantly send commissions to amuse us upon the

surface, whilst *they* are diligently working underground. In 1832, after waiting a long season for some of the *veteran* Clergy to move, I got up a requisition which was signed by upwards of sixty Clergyman in the West Riding, for a public meeting to *deliberate upon petitioning for the restriction of Pluralities, the re-valuation of all Ecclesiastical Benefices, and the adoption of a system similar in principle to that of Queen Anne's Bounty, by which, through the graduated contributions, or taxing of richer Benefices, the poorer might be augmented.* To this requisition the Archdeacon felt it is duty to withhold his acquiescence, on the ground that *we ought to wait and see what the forthcoming measures on such subjects would be.*

We have 'waited,' the measures are come out with a witness, and now the Clergy almost generally think "it is not advisable to call a meeting of the Clergy *at present!*" If any one should be so bold as to get up another requisition after this, let him not be surprised if it be said "IT IS NOW TOO LATE!" If it was "too soon," it is still "too soon," and, ERE LONG, IT WILL BE "TOO LATE!"

Meanwhile we are told that *Dean ry* petitions and *district* petitions and addresses have been sent. This is true; but our old Constitutional meeting has never been held. And is not the *too soon* and the *too late* excuse just as applicable to what are called hole and corner petitions and addresses, as to those which are adopted, after due discussion, by the assembled body? Let my "*hesitating*" brethren answer this.

But it is again objected, "that the Clergy should not shew too much anxiety about their *temporalities.*" Herein I agree, and if the principle of a sacred indifference to "*temporalities*" were in due operation we should have no Pluralists. Admitting that there *are* a few cases in which Pluralism is at present justifiable, I assert that the majority, *the very great majority*, are indefensible, and many of them amount to nothing less than a downright robbery of God and of the poor.

But as to the plea now before us, that to hold an Archidiaconal Meeting would argue too great concern about our *temporalities.* I rather incline to *turn the question round*, and to ask, "Do not many of the Clergy feel this question of *temporalities* "to be *too interesting* to themselves to run any risque of its being "mooted and discussed at a public meeting?" The one case is, I think, full as likely as the other.

Besides, if we are upright, and conscious of integrity in holding what we do possess of ecclesiastical *temporalities*, why should we blush to protest against those who would *Despoil the Poor* of their national interest in the Church property, or the *diligent Clerical Labourer* of his appointed maintenance. It appears to me to be very false delicacy thus to stand back when the spoiler is upon us and when our enemies have written upon their banner "Down with her! down with her, even to the ground."

If, indeed, any Clergyman is receiving "*hire*" for which *another* "*labours,*" and making church preferment the mere source of ease and luxury, then I can account for a wish to avoid discussion. And if any one is found who "*snuffeth up*" the distant-scent of patronage and preferment, and fears the disap-

pointment of his aim, I can account for his backwardness ; or if there be among us some heedless and "hireling" shepherds, I can account for their opposition ; but I confess I am quite at a loss to divine how it is, that so many of the *hundred and ten* whose autography to the requisition I hold, and many of whom I know are not chargeable with sordid principles such as have been supposed, should so cheerfully sign a requisition one day, and start aside like a broken bow the next.

Our friends often cry out, "why do not the clergy meet and declare themselves?" Our enemies say, that we are either afraid to do our duty, or else anxious to perpetuate abuses. Why do we not, then, shew an honest front to both parties, and tell the world that we agree with our veteran and amiable Metropolitan, in an earnest desire to have all abuses removed *by friendly hands*, and that we are at the same time determined to maintain the right to the last? (Referring to the speech of the Archbishop of Canterbury in the House of Lords.)

My Brethren who have dissuaded a public meeting, have, very probably, reasons perfectly satisfactory to themselves for their conduct. I have no wish to censure them for maintaining their opinions ; many of them, I feel, are my superiors in every respect, but they can neither think nor act for *me*, nor I for them. If they are charitable, they will allow me the enjoyment and the expression of my own opinion. Some of them who are fervent and laborious pastors have probably very religious objections to a public meeting. Still I must think they err in judgment. "Who is on the Lord's side? Who?" These are no times to abide in the sheepfolds to hear the bleating of the flocks.

I may perhaps be allowed to observe here, that an extensive intercourse with the working people of this Riding, and of other densely populated parts of the manufacturing districts, has afforded me an opportunity of satisfying myself that they are not unfriendly to the Established Church, but the contrary : and I feel assured that if *viable abuses* were removed, the great numerical strength of this kingdom would stand firm by the Church of England. I have often heard them freely declare their sentiments : generally, I believe, the Established Church has their good wishes, if not their preference, but they have often expressed their honest disgust "that those who do the work do not get the wages."

The Clergy little know their real position, or they would not act thus. I dare not now hope that they will attend to any thing from the *Curate* of Byerley, but I shall feel, at all events, that I have done what I could to place the Clergy in a fair and honest and bold position before their friends and foes. IF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND FALLS, IT MUST AND WILL BE BY HER OWN HAND.

Our good Ship is in a storm. Her cargo is shifted too much to *one side*. Justice to the proprietors, and prudence to the crew, demand that it should be *righted*. Of the Ship's final safety, I have no doubt. The PRINCIPLES of the Church of England cannot sink—but the storm gathers strength, and ere long, rather than the Ship should be lost by the blind selfishness of the merchants, the Great Pilot will order her merchandize, if not its monopolists, to be thrown overboard.

Satisfied for the present with having attempted to do my duty,
I thank you for your indulgence, and remain,

Dear Sir, yours, truly,

G. S. BULL.

P.S. I did not sign the Address to the King, because I am too dull to reconcile the expressed determination to save the Church, with the continued patronage of the Whig *spoilers*, and the contemporaneous issue of the Irish *sponge* Commission.

✂ THIS LETTER having been misrepresented in some quarters, and frequently called for in others, is now reprinted.

I think the day will come, if it is not already arrived, when many of the Clergy who were induced to withdraw their signatures from the Requisition for an Honest Public Meeting to declare against all Ecclesiastical abuses, will think they were not well advised.

I may be told, that a "COMMISSION" is now in existence to remove abuses. *I wish this may be its result.*

I am jealous of these "Commissions." Every thing is now put into Commission. It is not a Constitutional system.

LET THERE BE A PROPER COUNCIL OF THE CHURCH TO REMEDY ABUSES.

The Moravian Episcopal Church has its "Synod."

The Established Church in Scotland has its "General Assembly" and its Provincial Councils.

The Church of England has a mere shadow of a "Convocation"—which our Enemies laugh at as a *farce*.

Let the Church honestly and promptly *restore* herself to primitive rectitude. Let her call upon the People of England and the Parliament of England to support her in so doing.

Let her be just and she need not fear—Let her Ministers stand by the Industrious portion of Society—the plundered Poor and the depressed Labourers of this Country—then she may smile at all her Foes for *GOD will take her Part.*

But to suppose that the Church of England can stand whilst her patronage is abused as it is, and her duty neglected, (however great the recent increase of her faithful Pastors), is to suppose an impossibility. Pluralities and Non-residence *must* be abolished, *or the Church of England must fall.*

It is in vain to amuse ourselves by censuring the unchristian and rancourous spirit of our implacable Enemies among the *Political* Dissenters. It is in vain to lament over those *Pious* Dissenters who are carried away with their "Party."

There can be no doubt but *they* would have as great reason to regret the success of their own projects as Churchmen themselves; and that they would afterwards cry "Woe" to the day when they assisted to overturn the Established Church.

In spite of all this, the Church *as she is*, cannot stand. **SHE MUST BE CLEANSED, AND THAT PROMPTLY, FROM HER REAL ABUSES, OR SHE MUST FALL AND NONE CAN SAVE HER.** Let her be made *the Poor Man's Church*, and then the God of the Poor will bless us.

G. S. B.

